

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1-8, 11, 24-26, and 41-43. Please amend Claims 9, 10, 12-23, and 27-40. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1-8. Cancelled.

9. (Currently Amended) A system for distributing radio frequency signals in a physical area in which multiple wireless service providers wish to provide service, the system comprising:

a plurality of wireless base stations collocated at a hub location, the base stations receiving and transmitted radio frequency signals, with at least two of such base stations operating with radio frequency signals according to two different air interfaces;

a base station interface, also located at the hub location, for converting the radio frequency signals associated with the base stations to and from a transport signaling format;

a shared transport medium, for transporting the converted signals from the hub location to a plurality of remote access node locations, wherein the shared transport medium is an optical fiber and the shared transport medium uses SONET formatting;

a plurality of radio access nodes located at the remote access node locations, the radio access nodes each associated with a partial coverage area corresponding to only a portion of a total system coverage area, and the radio access nodes connected to the shared transport medium; and the radio access nodes further each comprising:

a plurality of slice modules, with each slice module containing equipment for converting received radio frequency signals formatting according to a selected one of the air interfaces to the transport signaling format and from the transport signaling format to the selected one of the air interfaces; A system as in claim 8 wherein a corresponding connection between a base station and a slice module is allocated a unique SONET frame.

10. (Currently Amended) A system for distributing radio frequency signals in a physical area in which multiple wireless service providers wish to provide service, the system comprising:
- a plurality of wireless base stations collocated at a hub location, the base stations receiving and transmitted radio frequency signals, with at least two of such base stations operating with radio frequency signals according to two different air interfaces;
 - a base station interface, also located at the hub location, for converting the radio frequency signals associated with the base stations to and from a transport signaling format;
 - a shared transport medium, for transporting the converted signals from the hub location to a plurality of remote access node locations, wherein the shared transport medium is an optical fiber and the shared transport medium uses SONET formatting;
 - a plurality of radio access nodes located at the remote access node locations, the radio access nodes each associated with a partial coverage area corresponding to only a portion of a total system coverage area, and the radio access nodes connected to the shared transport medium; and the radio access nodes further each comprising:
 - a plurality of slice modules, with each slice module containing equipment for converting received radio frequency signals formatting according to a selected one of the air interfaces to the transport signaling format and from the transport signaling format to the selected one of the air interfaces; ~~A system as in claim 8~~ wherein the radio access nodes are arranged in a logical ring, and wherein the data frames associated with the slices in a given radio access node are dropped and added to the ring at the respective slice.
11. Cancelled.
12. (Currently Amended) A system for distributing radio frequency signals in a physical area in which multiple types of wireless communication service is to be provided, the system comprising:

a plurality of wireless base stations collocated at a hub location, the base stations receiving and transmitted radio frequency signals, with at least two of such base stations operating with radio frequency signals according to two different air interfaces as specified by at least two difference wireless service types;

a plurality of down-converter (D/C) modules, a down-converter associated with each of the collocated base stations, each down-converter converting the radio frequency signals transmitted by the respective base station to an intermediate frequency carrier signal;

a plurality of analog to digital (A/D) modules, also located at the hub location, for converting the intermediate frequency carrier signals to digital signals;

a simulcast transport formatter, for receiving digital signals from the A/D modules and converting them to [[a]] transport formatted signals;

a plurality of transport media, for carrying the transport formatted signals to remote access node locations;

a transport media distribution network, for coupling each of the transport formatted signals to a selected sub-set of the remote access node locations;

a plurality of radio access nodes located at the remote access node locations, the radio access nodes each associated with a partial coverage area corresponding to only a portion of a total system coverage area, and the radio access nodes connected to the transport medium, the remote access nodes arranged in a plurality of sub-networks; and wherein a least one of the radio access nodes further comprises:

a plurality of slice modules, with each slice module containing equipment for converting received signals from the transport signal format to a selected one of the air interfaces.

13. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 12, wherein the number of slice modules located in at least one of the radio access nodes corresponds to a number of different service providers which are to provide service in the corresponding partial coverage area.

14. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 12₁ wherein at least two of the base stations collocated at the hub location are operated by two different wireless system service providers.
15. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 13₁ wherein at least two of the slice modules in at least one of the radio access nodes contain equipment as specified by an air interface used by two different wireless system service providers.
16. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 12₁ wherein at least two of the base stations operate in respective different radio frequency bands.
17. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 12₁ wherein at least two of the transmitted radio frequency signals are of two different bandwidths.
18. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 12₁ wherein the shared transport medium is an optical fiber.
19. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 18₁ wherein the shared transport medium uses SONET formatting.
20. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 19₁ wherein a corresponding transport connection between a base station and a slice module is allocated a unique SONET frame.
21. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:
 - a first base station generating radio frequency signals according to a first wireless system air interface;
 - a second base station generating radio frequency signals according to a second wireless system air interface;

a transport medium interface for converting radio frequency signals transmitted by the first and second base stations to a common transport medium ~~format~~;

a shared transport medium, for transporting the converted radio frequency signals transmitted by the first and second base stations, wherein the shared transport medium is an optical fiber and the shared transport medium uses SONET formatting;

a plurality of remotely located radio access nodes, each radio access node associated with a predetermined portion of a total system coverage area, and each radio access node coupled to receive signals from the common transport medium, each radio access node containing at least [[a]] first and second slice ~~module~~ modules associated with the respective first and second base stations;

a first slice module containing a suite of radio transmitter, amplifier, and antenna equipment as specified by the first air interface; and

a second slice module containing a suite of radio transmitter, amplifier, and antenna equipment as specified by the second air interface, wherein a corresponding transport connection between a base station and a slice module is allocated a unique SONET frame.

22. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 21, wherein at least two of the base stations operate in respective different radio frequency bands.

23. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 21, wherein at least two of the transmitted radio frequency signals are of two different bandwidths.

24-26. Cancelled.

27. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a first base station operating according to [[a]] first wireless system air interfaces;

a second base station ~~operated~~ operating according to [[a]] second wireless system air ~~interface~~ interfaces;

a transport medium interface for converting radio frequency signals transmitted by the first and second base stations to a common transport medium;

a plurality of remotely located radio access nodes, each radio access node associated with a predetermined sub-area portion of a total system coverage area, and each radio access node coupled to receive signals from the common transport medium, each radio access node containing at least [[a]] first and second slice ~~module~~ modules associated with the respective first and second base stations; and

means for equalizing sensitivity levels of radio frequency signals radiated by the radio access nodes at levels appropriate for the respective different air interfaces.

28. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 27, wherein the air interfaces are selected from the group consisting of advanced mobile phone service (AMPS) ~~AMPS~~, CDMA, and TDMA.
29. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 27, wherein the means for equalizing sensitivity levels is a balanced simulcast such that radio access nodes for two different air interfaces may be collocated throughout the system coverage area.
30. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 27, wherein the means for equalizing sensitivity levels further comprises:
 - means for determining which of the respective air interfaces requires a lowest intrinsic link budget level;
 - means for setting transmit power levels in a selected one of the radio access nodes depending upon such lowest intrinsic link budget level; and
 - means for simulcasting signals associated with other air interfaces for radio access nodes in adjacent sub-areas.
31. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 27, wherein the radio access nodes further each comprise:

a plurality of slice modules, with each slice module containing equipment for converting received radio frequency signals formatting according to a selected one of the air interfaces to ~~the~~ a transport signal format and from the transport signal format to the selected one of the air interfaces.

32. (Currently Amended) A method system as claim 27, wherein the number of slice modules located in each partial system coverage area corresponding to the number of different service providers for which wireless communication service is to be provided in the respective partial system coverage area.
33. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 27, wherein the first and second base stations are operated by two different wireless system service providers.
34. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 27, wherein the first and second base stations operate in respective different radio frequency bands.
35. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 27, wherein the first and second base stations provide transmitted radio frequency signals of two different bandwidths.
36. (Currently Amended) A method for providing multiple wireless communication service providers with access to radio equipment distributed throughout a coverage area, the method comprising the steps of:
 - accepting requests for distribution service from the multiple service providers, the requests specifying a desired air interface for wireless communication from among a plurality of available air interfaces, and an indication of which portions in the coverage area the particular air interface is to be supported;
 - installing first base station equipment operating with the air interface specified by ~~the~~ a service provider at a central location, the first base station equipment being collocated with additional base station equipment specified by other wireless service providers;

coupling the first base station equipment to receive traffic signals from a signaling network used by the ~~wireless communication~~ service provider;

converting the signals transmitted by ~~the~~ a first base station to a common signaling format;

coupling the common signaling format signals to a common transport medium;

locating a plurality of radio access nodes through the ~~system~~-coverage area, with at least one radio access node located in each portion of the ~~system~~-coverage area, the radio access nodes further containing radio equipment for receiving signals from the common transport medium and converting such signals to radio frequency signals; and

controlling, with a data processor, the connection of transport signals to specific radio access nodes as specified by the plurality of wireless system operators, wherein the common transport medium is an optical fiber and the common transport medium uses a SONET format, wherein a corresponding transport connection between a base station and a slice module is allocated a unique SONET frame.

37. (Currently Amended) A ~~system~~ method as in claim 36, wherein at least one of the radio access nodes further comprises:
 - a plurality of slice modules corresponds to a number of different service providers which are to provide service in the corresponding partial coverage area.
38. (Currently Amended) A ~~system~~ method as in claim 36, wherein at least two of the slice modules in at least one of the radio access nodes contain equipment as specified by an air interface used by two different wireless system service providers.
39. (Currently Amended) A ~~system~~ method as in claim 36, wherein at least two of the base stations operate in respective different radio frequency bands.
40. (Currently Amended) A ~~system~~ method as in claim 36, wherein at least two of the transmitted radio frequency signals are of two different bandwidths.

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41-43. Cancelled.